Do This

Liturgy as Performance

✦ Richard D. McCall

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Introduction

The Varieties of Liturgical Performance

For centuries Christians have explained their repeated enactment of the Holy Eucharist as an attempt to remain faithful to Jesus' words at the Last Supper: "Do this in remembrance of me."[1] Justin Martyr (c. 100–c. 165), whose *First Apology* and *Dialogue with Trypho* are two of the oldest explanations of the Christian meal, traces its celebration to these very words: "The apostles, in their memoirs which are called gospels, have handed down that they were commanded to this: Jesus took bread, and, after giving thanks, said 'Do this in remembrance of me; this is my body." And again, "[T]he offering of fine flour . . . was a type of the bread of the eucharist which our Lord Jesus Christ commanded us to offer in memory of the Passion He endured."[2] This "argument" would be repeated over and over again by apologists and theologians East and West and would survive into the modern period in the debate between Protestants and Catholics over the place of the Eucharist in the life of the church.

The unfortunate consequence of this obsession with the so-called "institution" of the Eucharist by Jesus at the Last Supper would be a medieval legalism that required such warrant for all sacramental acts and that reduced liturgical performance to the minimum needed to adhere to Jesus' command. On the positive side, however, the ordinance to do something may have ensured that Christian spirituality could never be reduced to mere

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doctrinal orthodoxy or passive assent. Built into the very warrant for sacramental worship is a verb of performance. Hidden in that performance is a vision of life in Christ that is not a state of being but rather an act, an act of the worshippers who *en*act a cosmos and a community that is nothing less than God's act of creation.

But the ordinance calls not just for any doing. Rather, it is a doing of remembrance ("Do this for my *anamnesis*"). We shall have occasion further on to examine more deeply this most polysemous word. Suffice it to say that any attempt to enact remembrance contains the seeds of what can be called drama. The church may never have intended to invent a dramatic liturgy. Certainly the early house Eucharists were simple occasions of reading and prayer and meal. Nonetheless, Christians inherited from the Jewish prayer tradition the habit of invoking God's active involvement in this present moment by remembering thankfully God's mighty acts in the story of God's people. Narrative remembers act; act fulfills narrative.

There is a seemingly irresistible temptation to speak about the liturgy of the Christian Church as somehow "dramatic." Theodore of Mopsuestia was not the first, but he was certainly the most systematic of the fourth-century theologians to describe the actions and the participants in the Holy Eucharist as representative of something other than what they appeared, in their liturgical functionality, to be. He tells the catechumens that in the offertory procession they must see Christ being led to his passion and in the deacons who enact it "the invisible ministering powers when they carry up the offering."[3]

Dionysus the Pseudo-Areopagite and Maximus Confessor in the East and Pseudo-Germanus and Amalarius of Metz in the West, to name only a few, developed this perspective to the extent that for Amalarius in the ninth century the liturgy was to be understood primarily as an enactment of allegorical, tropological, and anagogical acts after the model of scriptural exegesis developed by the Anglo-Saxon Bede. While not confining his vision of the liturgy to a simple dramatization of the life of Christ, "Amalar furnishes an elliptical view of salvation history, with an array of overlapping images designed to symbolize, and make present, the mighty works of God in Christ."[4] However much Amalarius would be censured during his lifetime, his "allegorical" and dramatic method of liturgical exegesis would dominate popular sacramental teaching until the last century.

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Such a dramatic analysis of the liturgy has not, however, been confined to the "official" teachings of the church. Medieval drama itself, in the form of the Passion and mystery or cycle plays of the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries and in such unique plays as the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament,* has been seen by scholars as nothing less than "commentaries" on the liturgy of the church, liturgical "expansions" in dramatic form of the basic acts of the liturgical year and the Mass.[5] Moreover, modern approaches to the history of the medieval drama, beginning with Karl Young and widely disseminated in the work of O. B. Hardison, take as their starting point an understanding of the Mass, the Office, and the liturgical calendar as dramatic enactments.[6] The debate among these scholars is less over whether there is a dramatic element to the liturgy than over what exactly constitutes "drama" and its differentiation from "liturgy." Is it the presence of costumes or impersonation or scripts or stage directions or an audience that separates a "play" from a "liturgy"? Or is it something else that "frames" the action and tells us in one case, "This is a play" and in another, "This is a liturgy"?

Recent theories of semiotics and performance, especially in the work of M. M. Bakhtin, Roland Barthes, and Umberto Eco, deriving from the linguistic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure and Louis Hjelmslev, have opened an even broader horizon for looking at the nature of the act or constellation of acts that forms the basis not only of drama and liturgy but of social acts, political acts, and even reality itself as it is enacted moment by moment as "once-occurrent Being-as-event."[7] The word *performance* has come to denote not only "a show put on by a performer for an audience" but also a many-faceted model for approaching all of that reality which can only be, for human beings, symbolic and enacted in our institutions, relationships, art, and rituals.[8] The basic structures of enactment in drama and in liturgy still fall on points along this continuum; but these points can be seen as part of a larger field that includes the enactment or performance of language[9] (and thus of culture) and of sociopolitical relationships,[10] not to mention the ontological status given to the *act* in the systems of Martin Heidegger, Alfred North Whitehead, and M. M. Bakhtin.[11]

Thus both *drama* and *liturgy,* the only two poles of enactment available to Theodore or Amalarius, have become terms in a far richer field of action, one that purports to enact a reality that, for both Theodore and Amalarius, could only be "imitated" or represented, at most made present anamnetically

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in the liturgy. For them the question was: "How can the divine reality be represented effectually in the rites of the church?" The question for the postmodern liturgical theologian might well be stated: "What is the place of the rites of the church in a world that is itself a performance, a continuing enactment that comes to be in the act?"

That the drama of medieval Europe "developed" from the liturgy of the church sometime during the tenth century has been the dominant assumption of twentieth-century scholarship at least since the publication in 1903 of E. K. Chambers's seminal *The Medieval Stage*. Asserting that the "dramatic tendencies of Christian worship declared themselves from an early period," Chambers sees his task as describing "a most singular new birth of drama in the very bosom of the Church's own ritual."[12] The child brought forth, which was to be the father of the great medieval cycle plays and the grandfather of Shakespeare, Chambers believed to have been the simple trope *Quem quaeritis?*

> Whom do you seek in the sepulcher, followers of Christ?
> Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified, O heavenly ones.
> He is not here, he has arisen as he foretold.
> Go, announce that he has risen from the sepulcher.
>
> ——
>
> [Quem quaeritis in sepulchro, Christicolae?
> Iesum Nazarenum crucifixum, o caelicolae.
> non est hic, surrexit sicut praedixerat.
> ite, nuntiate quia surrexit de sepulchro.]

The development of scholarship concerning this liturgical/dramatic interface begun with Chambers was taken up by his most important "successor" Karl Young, and became finally the subject of a critique begun by Hardison and continued by a number of scholars during the past thirty years.[13] More recent musicological scholarship has provided the most essential correctives to this literary history.[14]

In every case there are spoken or unspoken assumptions on the part of the literary critics and historians concerning what liturgy is, what drama is, and what, if anything, can be called "liturgical drama" or "dramatic liturgy." The widespread assumptions both that the liturgy of the tenth-century

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church was in some way "drama" and that the liturgical drama (e.g., the Visit to the Sepulcher, *Visitatio sepulchri*) "gave rise" to the later cycle plays have been corrected by subsequent studies of medieval performance and especially by musicological studies of medieval chant.

Nonetheless, some writers do not define clearly just what differentiates a "dramatic" liturgy from a "drama," liturgical or otherwise. In fact, it would seem that some recent work done in the field of political ritual (e.g., Ernst Kantorowicz's *The King's Two Bodies* and Geoffrey Koziol's *Begging Pardon and Favor*)[15] might suggest a new and more fruitful line of inquiry in the attempt to place both liturgy and drama in the historical context of the ritualizing behavior of the period from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries.

It seems fair to say that speculation about the dramatic nature of the medieval Mass drew impetus from the supposition that the drama "evolved" from the liturgy by way of the *Quem quaeritis* trope and other so-called liturgical dramas. That the liturgy is "enacted," that it is "commemorative" or anamnetic, even that it has a performative ritual structure might all have been said about it without attempts to discover in it the seeds of the drama, were it not for this simple trope and the historiography which dictates that like must beget like and simple forms must evolve into more complex forms. A corollary implicit in this historiography is that later forms reveal the nature of their antecedents.

Thus the Darwinian program, when applied to the history of the medieval theater, assumes that drama could develop only from a liturgy that was somehow already embryonically "drama" itself. Hardison's opening essay in *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages* drew attention to this prejudice and argued for a fresh look at the evidence. It was his contention that, as with so many other historical documentary traditions (including, we might add, the early Eucharistic Prayers), there is no demonstrable "evolution" of simpler into more complex forms. I would further affirm, along with scholars of the medieval drama, that there is no necessity for the liturgy to *be* a species of drama in order for it to invite dramatic exposition, commentary, and counterpoint. Rather, both liturgy and drama can be seen as subcategories of a larger human activity that has come to be called performance or enactment.

The organization of the argument in what follows presents an approach to the liturgy as a species of performance. This approach takes seriously the postmodern critique of methodology in general insofar as methodology

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tries to abstract itself from the context of the work under discussion or to fit all specific instances into the procrustean bed of a self-consistent theory. What I have attempted is less a method then an approach, a species of discourse that organizes its observations according to a schema but that refuses to reduce the work observed to the schema. To apply this approach, one would not simply analyze a liturgy by mapping it to a predetermined grid of structure or language. Rather, in the final chapters I have attempted to demonstrate how one would speak of the liturgy using a certain kind of discourse—one grounded in the language of so-called "performance theory."

However, I have also attempted to bring the wide-ranging diversity of what might be more accurately described as performance *theories* into a useful relationship by demonstrating their interrelated positions in a larger definition of performance. To accomplish this I suggest that each of the many performance approaches speaks to one of the so-called "four causes" from which Aristotle gathers up his famous definition of tragedy in chapter 6 of the *Poetics*.

In deriving a similar definition for liturgy, I do not claim that liturgy is tragedy or even drama or that liturgy can be reduced to a template. Rather, I attempt to gather up a definition of liturgy that does justice both to its similarities to and its differences from other kinds of performed events. To differentiate liturgical action from the popular meaning of "performance" as a display of virtuosity by one person or group of persons for an audience, I present various twentieth-century redefinitions of this term derived from linguistics, semiology, literary and dramatic criticism, and the behavioral sciences. But to avoid the theatrical overtones of the word, I often refer to the *enactment* of the liturgy, reserving the term *performance* to a more technical sense of the style or manner of that enactment.

After having examined some of these approaches, I organize them in a schema by which they can most profitably and appropriately be applied to a performance event considered not simply from the point of view of one approach but from the perspective of all four causes that Aristotle imagined to be at work in any made thing. By using this schema I derive a definition of the liturgy as performance.

I then attempt to apply the performative definition to an actual liturgical enactment. This approach would, of course, be applicable to any liturgy at any period for which we have evidence of the actual performance. I have

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chosen, by way of example, the celebration of the Mass at Rome in the early eighth century according to the Gregorian Sacramentary and the actions described in *Ordo Romanus I*. This enactment had far-reaching effects on the subsequent development of the performance of the liturgy in the West as the ordo and the sacramentary were disseminated, copied, modified, and imitated throughout the Carolingian Empire. As we shall see, moreover, the enactment described in the first Roman ordo may be the most appropriate working out of the words of the Roman Canon to be achieved in its long history. Later and more elaborate performances, such as those of the late Middle Ages, perhaps never again achieved the theological wedding of word to gesture that we find in this seminal enactment.

Finally, it must be borne in mind that the approach I am proposing must rely heavily on narrative recreation of the event—the mind's eye and ear must first attempt to see and hear what was enacted in order to approach the meaning of the event. Even better would be a recreated performance followed by each participant's description of the experience. The symbolic acts of the liturgy have a history and a context and can only be understood both as what they have been and as what they are in the present moment. And, like all real symbols, they can never mean just one thing.

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✦ 2 ✦

Performing Liturgical Interpretation in the Medieval West

In any search for the earliest relationship between the liturgy and the drama per se, it may be noted at the outset that nothing that might be called "drama" is in evidence in the Western Church before the tenth century. Western Europe was effectively without mainstream drama from the moment that Christianity gained political influence in the fourth century. As early as the second century, the decadence of late Roman drama and the reputed immorality of its practitioners had made the theater one of the professions that had to be abandoned before receiving baptism. Augustine, as is well known, prided himself for having left behind the life of the theater.

What is, perhaps, more surprising is that the Gothic tribes that constituted the locus of evangelism and the ever-growing center of Western Christendom from the fourth through the ninth centuries found the Roman theater decadent and repulsive. Their own tradition of minstrel storytelling had never included mimetic role-play, and they quickly rejected the excess, bawdry, and licentiousness of the Italian *histriones*.[1] Thus, by the early sixth century, the theater in the West survived only among the folk and in the occasional traveling mime or pantomime. Any sense of "official" drama must be seen as having been confined to the elaboration of the ceremonies surrounding the liturgy of the church.[2]

The rekindling of the dramatic instinct in Western Europe is usually considered to have begun in the ninth century with the elaboration of parts

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of the Mass and Office by means of tropes.[3] Not in themselves dramatic, these additions to the Introit and Kyrie of the Mass and the Antiphons of the Office allowed the introduction of nonbiblical, and nonofficial, expansions of the basic texts to emphasize the theme of a season or feast. Thus the Introit to the Easter Mass, by the end of the ninth century, had been expanded by the addition of the *Quem quaeritis* trope, which tells the story of the visit of the Marys to the sepulcher on Easter morning. Although such a trope would have at first been sung antiphonally by the two sides of the choir or by the choir and a cantor, it does not take a great stretch of the imagination to see how easily such a "script" would lend itself to dramatic enactment.

Indeed, the tenth-century *Regularis concordia* drawn up by Ethelwold, bishop of Winchester, contains specific stage directions and costuming to be used by the Benedictine monks as they enacted this little play at the third nocturn of matins on Easter morning.[4] While the third lesson was being chanted, one of the monks, dressed in an alb, would "approach the sepulcher without attracting attention and there sit quietly with a palm in his hand. While the third respond is chanted," St. Ethelwold continues, "let the remaining three follow, and let them all, vested in copes, bearing in their hands thuribles with incense, and stepping delicately as those who seek something, approach the sepulcher. These things are done in imitation of the angel sitting in the monument, and the women with spices coming to anoint the body of Jesus." What followed was a chanting of the aforementioned dialogue by the "actors," culminating in the recovery of the cross, which had been hidden on Good Friday, and the singing of the Te Deum. Ethelwold justifies this bit of drama on the grounds that it is instructive: "Since on this day we celebrate the laying down of the body of our Savior, if it seem good or pleasing to any to follow on similar lines the use of certain of the religious, which is worthy of imitation for the strengthening of faith in the unlearned vulgar and in neophytes, we have ordered it on this wise."[5]

This simple liturgical performance, along with others that would be elaborated particularly around the great feasts of Easter and Christmas, would eventually come to have great popular appeal. But it would not be until the twelfth century, with the building of the great Gothic cathedrals and cathedral schools, that these originally monastic endeavors would be staged for the people.[6] The naves of the great churches were transformed

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into a playing area surrounded by "mansions" representing the various locations of the liturgical drama, which began, in many instances, to include multiple scenes taken from the Bible and elaborate machinery for special effects. Hardin Craig believes that these essentially Latin plays were, nevertheless, products of the efforts of a variety of people, not all of whom were clerics. "That the provincial, often no doubt parochial, population and the members of schools and colleges did participate in the religious drama is beyond question. The records, often casually preserved, are fairly plentiful, widespread, and varied."[7]

The earliest manuscript evidence for the *Quem quaeritis* exchange used as part of a play dates from midcentury, and the earliest evidence for any sort of "staging" is found in the *Regularis concordia* of St. Ethelwold, written c. 970. Moreover, as Dunbar Ogden and others have demonstrated, parts of the *Quem quaeritis* and *Quem quaeritis in praesepe* were, in some instances, enacted in areas of the church where there was no possibility for the inclusion of spectators.[8] Although eventuating in, for example, the display of the grave-clothes to the waiting worshippers, such enactments would seem to retain more similarities to the ritual action of the silent Canon of the Mass than to anything we would ordinarily call drama.

There is no evidence for medieval drama during the early Carolingian period, although certainly the growing interest in ceremonial may be seen to contribute to a taste for enactment in both political and ecclesiastical ritual. Thus it is from the period of Louis the Pious (early ninth century) that we get the first coronation ordines, the prayers of which, modeled on episcopal consecration prayers, present a self-conscious appropriation of Old Testament typology to the king and the "Christian empire" of the later Carolingians.[9] The political ritual that constituted the Carolingian political myth, however, seems to have derived from ecclesial ritual rather than vice versa. Thus the anointing of the king apparently derived from the "new" practice of anointing the hands of priests and was accommodated to kingly anointing through prayer-images of the anointing of David by Samuel.

Later, the Cluniac reform movement of the late tenth and early eleventh centuries included an expansion of the liturgical action within the monastic communities affected. Such an expansion may be seen as a part of the kind of "dramatic" impulse that included the *Quem quaeritis* dialogue. Lanfranc's monastic constitutions, written for his new community at Canterbury, indicate a "filling in" of the time between matins and lauds with often-elaborate

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processions to stations at the side-altars of the cathedral. These very side-altars, derived from the Frankish love of Roman liturgical books with their stational Masses, may themselves have given impetus to the kind of processional staging using *platea* (playing space) and *sedes* (constructions representing particular locations) that would become the norm for medieval drama when still performed within the confines of the church building.

Nonetheless, in the centuries before the *Quem quaeritis,* "drama" did not influence the liturgy so much as liturgy became more *enacted.* O. B. Hardison's thesis in *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages* is that the Mass and the "Lenten Agon" followed by the rites of Holy Week and Easter *are* the drama of the early Middle Ages, but a drama that *is* the liturgy. The interpretive writings of Amalarius of Metz are just that: interpretive writings, "criticism," and not, as Christine Schnusenberg would suggest, "dramas."[10]

Hardison speculated that the *Quem quaeritis* grew from a dramatic post-baptismal moment in which the newly baptized at the Easter vigil were taken to the now empty "Easter Sepulcher." Were this picture accurate, we would have a moment in which a dramatic act commented on the baptismal liturgy.[11] In fact, the neophytes could be seen as playing the *role* of the Marys when they were asked by a deacon, "Whom do you seek, O followers of Christ," to which another replied on their behalf, "We seek Jesus of Nazareth, O heavenly ones." The neophytes, in this reconstruction, were then told that he was not there and that they must "go, tell his brethren that he is risen." At this point, according to Hardison, the neophytes returned to the church, and they or someone on their behalf made the first Easter proclamation. Such an event would seem to represent liturgy-becoming-liturgical-drama in the tradition, found in the fourth-century Holy Week rites described by Egeria at Jerusalem, of involving the worshippers.

Clifford Flanigan, however, has refuted Hardison's picture and repositioned the *Quem quaeritis* as a trope on the Easter Mass Introit.[12] For him it becomes a *commentary* to make clear that the words of the Introit psalm are to be understood as the risen Christ addressing his Father. The trope, that is, serves a celebratory and a didactic function. In any case, in the tenth century, the *Quem quaeritis* lines appear in the Introit of the Easter Mass, in some locations in pre–Easter Mass processions, and at Winchester and in Germany in a little play, the *Visitatio sepulchri,* positioned just before the Te Deum at Easter matins.

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That text, along with the Magi Play *(Officium stellae)* and the Shepherds' Play *(Officium pastorum)* at Christmas and the *Ordo prophetarum* in Advent, proliferated throughout the Continent; but I do not believe they can be said to influence the development of liturgical rites beyond the fact of their inclusion in them. Their use seems to have been both didactic (as in Ethelwold's statement in the *Regularis concordia* concerning the edification of neophytes and of the unlearned) and liturgical (see Ogden on the *Quem quaeritis* above) by the eleventh century.

The eleventh century witnessed the controversy over eucharistic doctrine revolving around Berengar of Tours. Lanfranc, who opposed Berengar's more symbolic understanding of the eucharistic presence, also replaced the cross with the Host in the ceremony of the *Elevatio* (its lifting up from the place in which it had been "buried" on Good Friday) on Easter. This may indicate, as it would in the future, a connection between ritual, drama, and the increasing piety of vision that some would see as a central element of medieval social life. That is, spectatorship was to become, by the late Middle Ages, a major social complex governing legal punishment as well as ecclesiastical ritual.[13]

Finally, another drama of the period, the twelfth-century vernacular Anglo-Norman *Adam,* may have been influenced by liturgical sources but was apparently *not* performed as part of the liturgy, was spoken, not sung, and, thus may have been the first actual "early medieval vernacular drama." The sung liturgical drama continued to be part of the Easter and Christmas celebrations, and its continuance might be seen as filling the void left by the loss of the great dramatic liturgies of Holy Week in an age that relied more and more on liturgical presentation *to* the people rather than enactment *by* the people.

The liturgical drama of the tenth and eleventh centuries can be characterized as "processional." One wonders whether, if the people of God had never moved into large basilicas, there would ever have been a liturgical drama. Four early forms that survive, the Visit to the Sepulcher (*Visitatio sepulchri* with its *Quem quaeritis* lines), the Office of the Star *(Officium stellae),* the Office of the Shepherds (*Officium pastorum* with its *Quem quaeritis in praesepe* lines), and the Procession of the Prophets *(Ordo prophetarum),* all involve one or more movements that mirror or comment upon liturgical movements of the Mass of the High Middle Ages—namely, processions, sung dialogues, and the solemn exposition of objects.

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Although the *Quem quaeritis* exchange did not derive from the Easter vigil (as Hardison believed) but was, as Karl Young, Clifford Flanigan, and Susan Rankin contend, a trope on the Introit of the Mass,[14] it nonetheless indicates a processional movement at its core. Indeed, it appears at the same period of history both as a trope on the Introit and as a processional before the Mass. It is a short step (and not necessarily one always taken) between singing the trope during the entrance rite and assigning "roles" to the singers who, at any rate, are walking toward the altar. Certainly the altar would have been, in this model, the earliest focus for the "Sepulcher." It was on the altar, after all, that the early *Depositio* (burial) and *Elevatio* (lifting up) of the Host took place during the rites of Maundy Thursday and Easter. Thus the earliest form could have been nearly indistinguishable from the troped Introits of other feasts except for the already existing paraliturgical rites surrounding the burial and "resurrection" of the Host.

By the time of Ethelwold's *Regularis concordia* (c. 970) the *Quem quaeritis* dialogue, at least at Winchester, had been "moved" to a place following the third nocturn of matins, immediately preceding the Te Deum. Here we see the first evidence of something that does not otherwise appear in the liturgy of the tenth and eleventh centuries, namely, the hint of impersonation on the part of the "performers" and the playing out of an action. Moreover, the locus for the "drama" may no longer be the altar but rather the sepulcher of the patron saint of the church or a replica of the Holy Sepulcher.

Thus liturgical, processional expansion may be seen to give way to representational action in a sort of setting. The participants are to walk to the sepulcher "as if searching for something." They wear rudimentary (though ecclesiastical) costumes and carry thuribles representing the oils to anoint the body of Jesus. This is clearly something "extra" that is like the liturgy in its use of movement and ecclesiastical costume but unlike the liturgy in its avowedly representational and presentational mode. What we witness here is the use of the words of the *Quem quaeritis* trope as the dialogue of a play, the *Visitatio sepulchri*.

However, the line is a fine one. Although no ordo of the period directs the participants in the liturgy to "represent" anything or anyone, Amalarius of Metz and Honorius of Autun certainly provided the contemporary imagination with a complete set of representational parameters for Mass and calendar. It is no wonder that Hardison is so taken with Amalarius's allegorical analysis of the liturgy. Such an approach represents a sort of middle

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ground, a fine line between anamnesis and mimesis, between liturgical enactment and dramatic representation.

The point is, perhaps, even more finely drawn in the Christmas "dramas," clearly influenced by the *Quem quaeritis in sepulchro.* Here the shepherds are asked, *Quem quaeritis in praesepe,* "Whom do you seek in the manger?" They reply that they are looking for Jesus, the Son of God. What they and the rest of the congregation are then shown is, often, a statue of Mary and the Christ Child. Here, as in the Easter drama of the Fleury Playbook, the holy people of God *(plebs sancta dei)* are included as "actors"; they are brought to see Christ and even invited to lay the gifts at the manger.

This would seem to represent a middle way between liturgy and drama proper, a stage in which, just as in the liturgy of the period, enactors (the priest, a deacon, the cantor) speak (chant) on behalf of the people, who are brought to a place where Christ is revealed (either as empty tomb or as Child of Mary). This acting-on-behalf of the people is at the heart of the so-called clericalization of the tenth and especially eleventh centuries. However much abused it would be after Lateran IV, it seems to have begun as a vision of a Christian society in which each order, *oratores, pugnatores,* and *laboratores,* performed its specific role in the body on behalf of the others. The exchange among these orders was governed by rituals of gift exchange,[15] and these may be taking place between the *oratores* and the other orders during the Mass and, in this case, in the early liturgical dramas.

The last form we might examine in this brief summary of the period, the *Ordo prophetarum,* the Procession of the Prophets, is performed during, and derived from, the Advent focus on the precursors of Jesus. These forms are almost entirely presentational and didactic. They present a procession of Old Testament prophets who then engage in debate with unbelievers on the truth of Christ's Messiahship and Godhead. They are apparently derived from a sermon attributed to Gregory the Great. This form becomes almost entirely presentational and representational and, as far as I know, was never "performed" away from the spectators, as was, on occasion, the *Visitatio sepulchri.*

Although I do not wish to overstate the case, these liturgical enactments may have preserved vestiges of popular participation in the Mass in a period in which the actual liturgical action was becoming increasingly remote from the people. But the great Gothic cathedrals with their impermeable rood screens were still in the future, and these "plays" seem very much a part

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of the liturgical world in which they developed. Let us examine a specific instance of the transformation of a liturgical action into one that has become presentational or performative while still a part of the liturgy. This transformation may shed some light on the relationship between the two types of performance that we are examining: the liturgical and the dramatic.

The final 150 years of the last millennium—the age, in the West, of the Carolingians and the Ottonians, the age of Alcuin and the reforms of Benedict of Aniane—were a watershed in the liturgical life of the Western Church. Like a great lens, the Frankish Church would gather the prayers and practices of public worship inherited in all their diversity from the fathers of the church, from the ages of Gelasius and of Gregory the Great, and from the Eastern Empire and focus them into the images of the missals, pontificals, and rituals that would give form to Christian liturgy for the next thousand years. The vast number of sacramentaries, ordines, and other *libelli* (little books) that have survived from this period, in the characteristic Carolingian minuscule of the Frankish scriptoria, formed the basis of the worship of evolving Europe and returned, finally and much altered, to their place of origin. In the form of the Romano-Germanic Pontifical of the tenth century, Europe gave back to Rome the distilled essence of two centuries of devotion to the ways of Rome. Such devotion did not, however, preclude an even greater attachment to the poetry and drama of the Franks, the Gauls, the Germans, and the Goths. That pontifical, from which would arise the *Missale Romanum,* is as much a product of the experience of evolving Europe as of the city that, during the same period, was seeking the ecclesial hegemony of the West.

Nowhere is the cross-pollination of the old West with the new more evident than in the prayers and rites surrounding the blessing of the paschal candle on Holy Saturday, the *sabbato sancto* of the sacramentaries and ordines of the eighth and ninth centuries. In these rites we can trace the confrontation of the rites practiced in the papal city with the desire for lush poetry and dramatic expression (however frequently self-abnegating) that is the mark of the Gallican and Frankish spirit as revealed in the surviving forms. Moreover, that tendency to dramatic enactment, which, during this same time, was giving rise both to the allegorical interpretations of Amalarius of Metz and to the germination of Western drama in the *Quem quaeritis* trope, can be seen in the development of the vigil liturgies from the Gelasian Sacramentary (c. 750) to the Pontifical of Poitiers (c. 875).

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